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ABSTRACT

This packet provides primary source documents and lesson plans relating to the study of Jackie Robinson as a civil rights advocate. The legendary baseball player, Jack Roosevelt Robinson, was the first black man to "officially" play in the big leagues in the 20th century. Jackie Robinson was not only a stellar baseball player, but he went on to champion the cause of civil rights when he retired from the game. The lessons relate to civil rights history, character education, and civic responsibility. The primary documents used in the packet include: (1) "Telegram to the White House, August 13, 1957"; (2) "Letter to President Eisenhower, May 13, 1958"; (3) "Draft letter from Vice-President Nixon, November 4, 1960"; (4) "Letter to President Kennedy, February 9, 1961"; (5) "Telegram to President Kennedy, June 15, 1963"; (6) "Photograph, August 28, 1963"; (7) "Telegram to President Johnson, March 9, 1965"; (8) "Letter to President Johnson, April 18, 1967"; and (9) "Letter to the White House, April 20, 1972." A collection of Robinson quotes also is included and could be used for classroom work. (EH)

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ED 460 899

BEYOND THE PLAYING FIELD

Jackie Robinson, Civil Rights Advocate

Lesson Plan

from the

National Archives and Records Administration

URL: http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/robinson

SO 029 268

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Beyond the Playing Field

Jackie Robinson, Civil Rights Advocate

To the average man in the average American community, Jackie Robinson was just what the sports pages said he was, no more, no less. He was the first Negro to play baseball in the major leagues. Everybody knew that. . . . In remembering him, I tend to de-emphasize him as a ball player and emphasize him as an informal civil rights leader. That's the part that drops out, that people forget.

-Rachel Robinson

Jack Roosevelt Robinson (1919-72), the first black man to "officially" play in the big leagues in the 20th century, possessed enormous physical talent and a fierce determination to succeed. In the course of a distinguished 10-year career beginning in 1947, Robinson led the Brooklyn Dodgers to six National League titles and one victorious World Series. Beyond his many and stellar baseball feats, Jackie Robinson went on to champion the cause of civil rights when he retired from the game.

The National Archives and Records Administration holds numerous records relating to Jackie Robinson, many of which pertain to his period of civil rights advocacy. Several belonging to that time have been reproduced here for educators teaching courses that involve civil rights events and issues, character education, and effective citizenship skills.

The Documents:

1) Telegram to the White House
August 13, 1957

2) Letter to President Eisenhower
May 13, 1958

3) Draft letter from Vice-President Nixon
November 4, 1960

4) Letter to President Kennedy
February 9, 1961

5) Telegram to President Kennedy
June 15, 1963

6) Photograph
August 28, 1963

7) Telegram to President Johnson
March 9, 1965

8) Letter to President Johnson
April 18, 1967

9) Letter to the White House
April 20, 1972

The Lessons
(relating to documents 1-9):

Civil Rights History

Character Education

Civic Responsibility

Robinson Quotes

Above: Jackie Robinson, undated, Records of the United States Information Agency, Record Group 306 (306-PS-50-4730), is available from the Still Pictures Branch at the National Archives at College Park, MD.

Exercise # 1: Civil Rights History

Time required:

One to two class periods

Objective:

To identify key civil rights events and issues between 1957 and 1972 by analyzing archival documents.

Standards correlation:

This lesson correlates to the *National Standards for United States History*:

- Era 9, standard 4: The struggle for racial and gender equality and for the extension of civil liberties
- Standards in Historical Thinking 3, 4, and 5: Historical Analysis and Interpretation, Historical Research Capabilities, and Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-making

Materials needed:

- Documents 1 - 9
- Student Worksheet
- Student Worksheet--Key
- Written Document Analysis Worksheet (8 copies)
- Photographic Document Analysis Worksheet

Procedures:

1. Make copies of each of the nine documents, the student worksheet, and the document analysis worksheets.

2. Divide the class into nine groups. Give each group one document to analyze and the appropriate document analysis worksheet.

3. Allow student groups 15-20 minutes to read and analyze their documents. Ask them to complete the document analysis worksheet and then identify the events and issues of the civil rights movement referred to in their documents. Explain that an event could be a meeting, the passage of a bill, an election, or a sit-in demonstration and that issues might include "equality," "race relations," "political strategy," and "violence."

4. Distribute one copy of the student worksheet to each student.

5. Ask a volunteer from each group to describe the content of the group's document for the class and identify the events and issues mentioned or implied within.

6. Instruct students to complete their worksheets based on the information presented by their classmates.

7. Lead a discussion using the following questions as a guide:

- What are the similarities and differences between the events and issues identified in documents 1-4 and documents 5-9? According to Jackie Robinson, were things improving?
- Do you think the events caused or resulted from the issues that concerned Robinson?
- Five hundred years from now, if these nine documents were the only surviving pieces of evidence describing the civil rights struggle in the United States in the 20th century, what information about that struggle would survive? How accurate would that information be?

Follow up: Encourage students to create a time line covering the years 1957-72 that identifies the events mentioned in the documents and other equally significant events.

Exercise #1: Civil Rights History

Student Worksheet

Directions: Complete the following with information presented by your classmates.

Document # 1
Date:
From:
To:
Event:
Issue:

Document # 2
Date:
From:
To:
Event:
Issue:

Document # 3
Date:
From:
To:
Event:
Issue:

Document # 4
Date:
From:
To:
Event:
Issue:

Document # 5
Date:
From:
To:
Event:
Issue:

Document # 6
Date:
From:
To:
Event:
Issue:

Document # 7
Date:
From:
To:
Event:
Issue:

Document # 8
Date:
From:
To:
Event:
Issue:

Document # 9
Date:
From:
To:
Event:
Issue:

Exercise #1: Civil Rights History

Student Worksheet Key

Directions: Complete the following with information presented by your classmates.

Document # 1
Date: 8/13/57
From: Jackie Robinson
To: Fred Morrow (White House)
Event: 1957 Civil Rights Bill
Issue: equality

Document # 2
Date: 5/13/58
From: Jackie Robinson
To: President Eisenhower
Event: Summit Meeting of Negro Leaders
Issue: patience, segregation

Document # 3
Date: 11/4/60
From: Richard Nixon
To: Jackie Robinson
Event: 1960 election, arrest of Dr. King
Issue: politics, election issue

Document # 4
Date: 2/9/61
From: Jackie Robinson
To: President Kennedy
Event: Kennedy inauguration, emerging African nations
Issue: future, assertiveness, social awakening

Document # 5
Date: 7/15/63
From: Jackie Robinson
To: President Kennedy
Event: Medgar Evers's assassination
Issue: violence

Document # 6
Date: 8/28/63
Photo of Jackie Robinson and son
Event: March on Washington
Issue: future

Document # 7
Date: 3/9/63
From: Jackie Robinson
To: President Johnson
Event: 1965 violence in Alabama
Issue: violence

Document # 8
Date: 4/18/67
From: Jackie Robinson
To: President Johnson
Event: Vietnam War, riots in Tennessee and Ohio
Issue: firmer stand on civil rights

Document # 9
Date: 4/20/72
From: Jackie Robinson
To: Roland Elliott (White House)
Event: (Warning)
Issue: generational differences

Please note that the answers given for issues are suggestions and that students may add others.

Written Document Analysis Sheet

1. TYPE OF DOCUMENT (Check one):

___ Newspaper	___ Map	___ Advertisement
___ Letter	___ Telegram	___ Congressional record
___ Patent	___ Press release	___ Census report
___ Memorandum	___ Report	___ Other

2. UNIQUE PHYSICAL QUALITIES OF THE DOCUMENT (Check one or more):

___ Interesting letterhead	___ Notations
___ Handwritten	___ "RECEIVED" stamp
___ Typed	___ Other
___ Seals	

3. DATE(S) OF DOCUMENT: _____

4. AUTHOR (OR CREATOR) OF THE DOCUMENT: _____

POSITION (TITLE): _____

5. FOR WHAT AUDIENCE WAS THE DOCUMENT WRITTEN? _____

_____

6. DOCUMENT INFORMATION (There are many possible ways to answer A-E.)

A. List three things the author said that you think are important:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

B. Why do you think this document was written?

_____

_____

C. What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document.

_____

_____

D. List two things the document tells you about life in the United States at the time it was written:

_____

_____

E. Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the document:

_____

Photograph Analysis Sheet

Step 1. **Observation**

A. Study the photograph for 2 minutes. Form an overall impression of the photograph and then examine individual items. Next, divide the photo into quadrants and study each section to see what new details become visible.

B. Use the chart below to list people, objects, and activities in the photograph.

PEOPLE	OBJECTS	ACTIVITIES

Step 2. **Inference**

Based on what you have observed above, list three things you might infer from this photograph.

_____

_____

_____

Step 3. **Questions**

A. What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?

_____

_____

B. Where could you find answers to them?

_____

_____

Exercise #2: Character Education

Time required:

One or two class periods

Objective:

To analyze the content and tone of historical documents and determine which attributes of Jackie Robinson's character contributed to his success as the baseball player who broke the color barrier and as a political activist.

Standards Correlation:

This lesson correlates to the *National Standards for United States History*

- Era 9, standard 4: The struggle for racial and gender equality and for the extension of civil liberties
- Standards in Historical Thinking 3, 4 and 5: Historical Analysis and Interpretation, Historical Research Capabilities, and Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-making

Materials needed:

Documents 1 - 9 and two large pieces of butcher paper

Procedures:

1. Divide the class in half. Ask one group to brainstorm a list of character attributes they think a political activist must possess. Ask one student to record the list on a sheet of butcher paper.

2. Ask the other group to brainstorm a list of character attributes they think the first black man to play major league professional baseball would have possessed. Ask one student to record the list on a sheet of butcher paper.

3. Post both lists, and conduct a brief class discussion on the lists' similarities and differences.

4. Ask students to analyze document 1 (either by reading their own copy or by listening to a fellow student read or describe it), paying particular attention to the attributes of Robinson's character that it reveals.

5. Review the character attributes listed by students and ask which, if any, of the attributes are revealed in this document. Place a check mark next to that (those) attribute(s).

6. Repeat steps 4 and 5 with the remaining documents.

7. Ask students to refer to the lists and documents and write a single paragraph response to the question, "Which attributes of Jackie Robinson's character contributed to his success as the baseball player who broke the color barrier and as a political activist?"

Follow up: Encourage students to search library resources to find adjectives that describe Robinson's character. Direct students to add any new or different traits they find to the class list.

Exercise #3: Civic Responsibility

Time Requirement:

Two class periods

Objective:

To use the information contained in historical documents to classify ways citizens can influence government policy.

Standards Correlation:

This lesson correlates to the *National Standards for United States History*:

- Era 9, standard 4: The struggle for racial and gender equality and for the extension of civil liberties
- Standards in Historical Thinking 3, 4, and 5: Historical Analysis and Interpretation, Historical Research Capabilities, and Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-making

This lesson also correlates to the *National Standards for Civics and Government*:

- Part V: What are the roles of the citizen in American Democracy?

Materials Needed:

- Documents 1 - 9
- copies of student worksheet
- student worksheet key

Procedures:

1. Reproduce copies of the nine documents and the student worksheet for each student.

2. Ask students to number from 1 to 9 on a sheet of paper leaving six lines between each number.

3. Read aloud each of the following scenarios, pausing to allow students to write their responses to the questions on their papers.

A. A bill has just passed in the Senate and is on its way to the House of

Representatives. Although you favor the principle of the bill, you oppose the bill in its present form because you fear it does not do enough. What do you do? Why?

B. You have just returned from a meeting at which the President of the United States spoke. His speech frustrated you. What do you do? Why?

C. It is the fall of an election year. You support a particular candidate, and you are a well-known celebrity. The race is predicted to be very close. What do you do? Why?

D. The election is over and the candidate whom you supported did not win. You hope the new President will support issues that concern you. What do you do? Why?

E. An important leader of a cause you believe in is going to attend the funeral of another leader who was recently assassinated. You are concerned for his safety. What do you do? Why?

F. A large rally is going to be held in Washington DC. People in attendance will be showing their support for a cause in which you strongly believe. What do you do? Why?

G. A place of worship in a community more than 1,000 miles from your home has been bombed. What do you do? Why?

H. A leader of a cause you believe in has spoken out against an executive policy that you also support. You fear that the words of protest spoken by this leader will cause the President to limit his efforts towards your common cause. What do you do? Why?

I. You sense that a younger generation will not be as patient as your generation was to wait for changes to occur in government policy. You believe that violence could erupt at any moment. What do you do? Why?

4. Ask for two or three responses to each scenario. Inform students that each scenario was similar to one Jackie Robinson faced between 1957 and 1972.

5. Distribute copies of the documents and worksheet to each student. Ask students to analyze the documents and determine the actual actions taken by Robinson and then, complete the worksheet comparing Robinson's actions to their own stated reactions.

6. Discuss the completed worksheets with students.

Follow up:
Ask students to identify different ways in which citizens can take an active role in policy-making today. Then ask whether they think technology allows citizens to be more or less actively involved.

Exercise #3: Civic Responsibility

Student Worksheet

Directions: Using the information contained in the documents, your textbook, and the earlier class exercise, complete the following.

1. Scenario: A bill has just passed in the Senate and is on its way to the House of Representatives. Although you favor the principle of the bill, you oppose the bill in its present form because you fear it does not do enough.
Historical event referred to:_____
Jackie Robinson's action: _____
Was your stated action: (circle one) similar or different

2. Scenario: You have just returned from a meeting at which the President of the United States spoke. His speech frustrated you.
Historical event referred to:_____
Jackie Robinson's action: _____
Was your stated action: (circle one) similar or different

3. Scenario: It is the fall of an election year. You support a particular candidate, and you are a well-known celebrity. The race is predicted to be very close.
Historical event referred to:_____
Jackie Robinson's action: _____
Was your stated action: (circle one) similar or different

4. Scenario: The election is over and the candidate whom you supported did not win. You hope the new President will support issues that concern you.
Historical event referred to:_____
Jackie Robinson's action: _____
Was your stated action: (circle one) similar or different

5. Scenario: An important leader of a cause you believe in is going to attend the funeral of another leader who was recently assassinated. You are concerned for his safety.
Historical event referred to:_____
Jackie Robinson's action: _____
Was your stated action: (circle one) similar or different

6. Scenario: A large rally is going to be held in Washington DC. People in attendance will be showing their support for a cause in which you strongly believe.
Historical event referred to:_____
Jackie Robinson's action: _____
Was your stated action: (circle one) similar or different

7. Scenario: A place of worship in a community more than 1,000 miles from your home has

been bombed.
Historical event referred to:_____
Jackie Robinson's action: _____
Was your stated action: (circle one) similar or different

8. Scenario: A leader of a cause you believe in has spoken out against an executive policy that you also support. You fear that the words of protest spoken by this leader will cause the President to limit his efforts towards your common cause. Historical event referred to:_____
Jackie Robinson's action: _____
Was your stated action: (circle one) similar or different

9. Scenario: You sense that a younger generation will not be as patient as your generation to wait for changes to occur in government policy. You believe that violence could erupt at any moment.
Historical event referred to:_____
Jackie Robinson's action:
_____
Was your stated action: (circle one) similar or different

Exercise #3: Civic Responsibility

Student Worksheet Key

1. Scenario: A bill has just passed in the Senate and is on its way to the House of Representatives. Although you favor the principle of the bill, you oppose the bill in its present form because you fear it does not do enough.
Historical event referred to: Civil Rights Act of 1957
Jackie Robinson's action: sent a telegram to the White House
Was your stated action: (circle one) answers will vary

2. Scenario: You have just returned from a meeting at which the President of the United States spoke. His speech frustrated you.
Historical event referred to: speech made by Eisenhower to the Summit Meeting of Negro Leaders in May 1958
Jackie Robinson's action: wrote a letter to the President
Was your stated action: (circle one) answers will vary

3. Scenario: It is the fall of an election year. You support a particular candidate, and you are a well-known celebrity. The race is predicted to be very close.
Historical event referred to: the election of 1960
Jackie Robinson's action: actively campaigned for Nixon
Was your stated action: (circle one) answers will vary

4. Scenario: The election is over and the candidate whom you supported did not win. You hope the new President will support issues that concern you.
Historical event referred to: election of Kennedy in 1960
Jackie Robinson's action: wrote a letter to Kennedy
Was your stated action: (circle one) answers will vary

5. Scenario: An important leader of a cause you believe in is going to attend the funeral of another leader who was recently assassinated. You are concerned for his safety.
Historical event referred to: assassination of Medgar Evers
Jackie Robinson's action: sent a telegram to the White House
Was your stated action: (circle one) answers will vary

6. Scenario: A large rally is going to be held in Washington DC. People in attendance will be showing their support for a cause in which you strongly believe.
Historical event referred to: the March on Washington
Jackie Robinson's action: attended the march with his son
Was your stated action: (circle one) answers will vary

7. Scenario: A place of worship in a community more than 1,000 miles from your home has been bombed.
Historical event referred to: bombings in Alabama

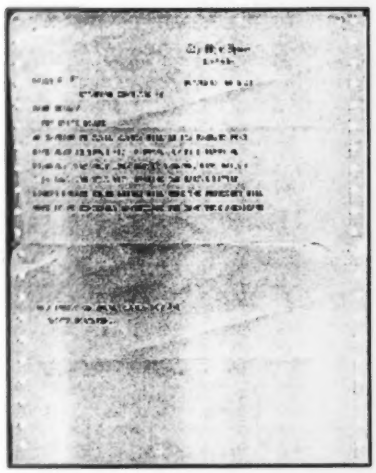
Jackie Robinson's action: sent a telegram to the White House
Was your stated action: (circle one) answers will vary

8. Scenario: A leader of a cause you believe in has spoken out against an executive policy that you also support. You fear that the words of protest spoken by this leader will cause the President to limit his efforts towards your common cause.
Historical event referred to: Dr. King's opposition to The Vietnam War
Jackie Robinson's action: wrote a letter to the President
Was your stated action: (circle one) answers will vary

9. Scenario: You sense that a younger generation will not be as patient as your generation was to wait for changes to occur in government policy. You believe that violence could erupt at any moment.
Historical event referred to: concerns over black youth
Jackie Robinson's action: wrote a letter to the White House
Was your stated action: (circle one) answers will vary

Document #1

TELEGRAM
JACKIE ROBINSON TO E. FREDERICK MORROW
AUGUST 13, 1957



File: OF-142-A-5 Little Rock, Arkansas-School Integration (4); Box 733, White House Central Files; Official Files; Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

Jackie Robinson sent this message to Presidential assistant E. Frederick Morrow in August 1957 as the first civil rights legislation since Reconstruction was being negotiated between Congress and the Eisenhower administration. Public citizen Robinson--along with race leaders such as Ralph Bunche, A. Philip Randolph, and the publishers of the popular black newspapers--the *Chicago Defender*, *[Baltimore] Afro-American*, and the *[New York] Amsterdam News*--considered the emerging final version of the 1957 Civil Rights Act too weak and urged Eisenhower to veto it. In the end, Eisenhower signed the bill.

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The White House
Telegram

WA012 NL PD

'57 AUG 13 AM 6 31

STAMFORD CONN AUG 12

FRED MORROW

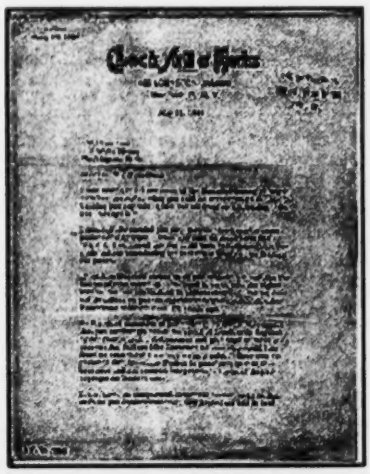
THE WHITE HOUSE

AM OPPOSED TO CIVIL RIGHTS BILL IN ITS PRESENT FORM.
HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH A NUMBER OF MY FRIENDS WE
DISAGREE THAT HALF LOAF BETTER THAN ONE HAVE WAITED
THIS LONG FOR BILL WITH MEANING CAN WAIT A LITTLE
LONGER UNLESS HOUSE AMENDS BILL HOPE THE PRESIDENT WILL
VETO IT WE SINCERELY APPRECIATE THE MANY TRUE AMERICANS

WHO INSIST ON EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL
JACKIE ROBINSON.

Document #2

LETTER
JA KIE ROBINSON TO PRESIDENT DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER
MAY 13, 1958 (2 pages)



File: OF-142-A-3 Negro Matters; Box 731; White House Central Files; Official Files; Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

The Supreme Court ruled in 1954 that States must integrate their public schools, but few began to do so voluntarily. Although Arkansas had begun desegregation elsewhere in its school system, in September 1957 Governor Orval Faubus, hoping to gain political favor, used National Guardsmen to block entry of nine black students who were supposed to attend Little Rock's Central High School that school term. Faubus alleged that without such action, violence would have erupted.

When President Eisenhower reluctantly sent in Federal troops to protect the students and ensure their right to be at Central High, Jackie Robinson, now a coffee and food vending executive, was reasonably pleased although he believed that decisive Presidential action on civil rights was overdue. Over the years, he had grown increasingly impatient with what he regarded as Eisenhower's failure to face up to the hard facts: Not only did racism exist, so did white efforts to physically intimidate Southern blacks who dared to challenge segregation. He therefore called upon the Chief Executive to guarantee the Federal Government's support of black attempts to exercise rights already granted under the Constitution but in practice denied them because of white resistance.

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Telephone
MUrray Hill 2-0500

Cockfull of Nuts

425 LEXINGTON AVENUE
New York 17, N. Y.

THE WHITE HOUSE
MAY 14 11 36 AM '58
RECEIVED

May 13, 1958

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

I was sitting in the audience at the Summit Meeting of Negro Leaders yesterday when you said we must have patience. On hearing you say this, I felt like standing up and saying, "Oh no! Not again.

I respectfully remind you sir, that we have been the most patient of all people. When you said we must have self-respect, I wondered how we could have self-respect and remain patient considering the treatment accorded us through the years.

17 million Negroes cannot do as you suggest and wait for the hearts of men to change. We want to enjoy now the rights that we feel we are entitled to as Americans. This we cannot do unless we pursue aggressively goals which all other Americans achieved over 150 years ago.

As the chief executive of our nation, I respectfully suggest that you unwittingly crush the spirit of freedom in Negroes by constantly urging forbearance and give hope to those pro-segregation leaders like Governor Faubus who would take from us even those freedoms we now enjoy. Your own experience with Governor Faubus is proof enough that forbearance and not eventual integration is the goal the pro-segregation leaders seek.

In my view, an unequivocal statement backed up by action such as you demonstrated you could take last fall in deal-

MAY 26 1958

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ing with Governor Faubus if it became necessary, would let it be known that America is determined to provide -- in the near future -- for Negroes -- the freedoms we are entitled to under the constitution.

Respectfully yours,

Jackie Robinson

Jackie Robinson

JR:cc

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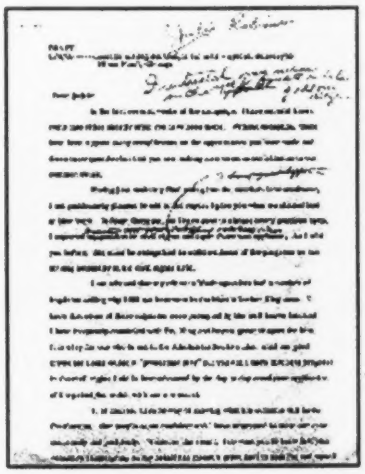
National Archives and Records Administration

Document #3

DRAFT LETTER
RICHARD M. NIXON TO JACKIE ROBINSON
NOVEMBER 4, 1960 (2 pages)



File: Jackie Robinson; Box 649; Series 320: General Correspondence Files; Richard M. Nixon Pre-Presidential Papers; National Archives and Records Administration - Pacific Region, (Laguna Niguel, CA).

Presidential candidate Richard Nixon wrote this letter 4 days before the 1960 Presidential election. The annotations in black ink are Nixon's. Robinson was pressured into taking an unpaid leave of absence and ending his triweekly column with the liberal *New York Post* when he publicly endorsed Nixon. Originally the ex-player worked on behalf of liberal Minnesota senator Hubert Humphrey but when Humphrey was eliminated early in the primaries, Robinson's support was up for grabs. Robinson viewed Nixon's civil rights record as more promising than Kennedy's, especially after meeting with both candidates.

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Jackie Robinson

DRAFT
11/4/60 -----must be mailed out tonight air mail - special delivery to
Hilton Hotel, Chicago

Dear Jackie:

I reiterated my position on the need for Congress to pass legislation to guarantee all our citizens

In the last several weeks of the campaign, I have several times come into cities shortly after you have been there. Without exception, there have been a great many compliments on the appearances you have made and there is no question but that you are making an enormous contribution to our common cause.

Having just made my final swing into the south and the southwest, I am particularly pleased to add to the report I gave you when we chatted last in New York. In South Carolina, as I have done in almost every southern state, I repeated my position on civil rights and again there was applause. As I told you before, this must be recognized as solid evidence of the progress we are making nationally in the civil rights field.

I am advised that my office in Washington has had a number of inquiries asking why I did not intervene in the Martin Luther King case. I know that some of these inquiries were prompted by the well known fact that I have frequently counseled with Dr. King and have a great respect for him. It is easy for one who is not in the Administration to make, what our good friend Joe Louis called a "grandstand play" but you and I know that real progress in the civil rights field is best advanced by the day to day consistent application of the principles which we know are sound.

I, of course, have no way of knowing what the outcome will be on the election. Our people seem confident and I have attempted to state our case accurately and positively. Whatever the result, I do want you to know that your voluntary campaigning on my behalf has meant a great deal to both Pat and myself

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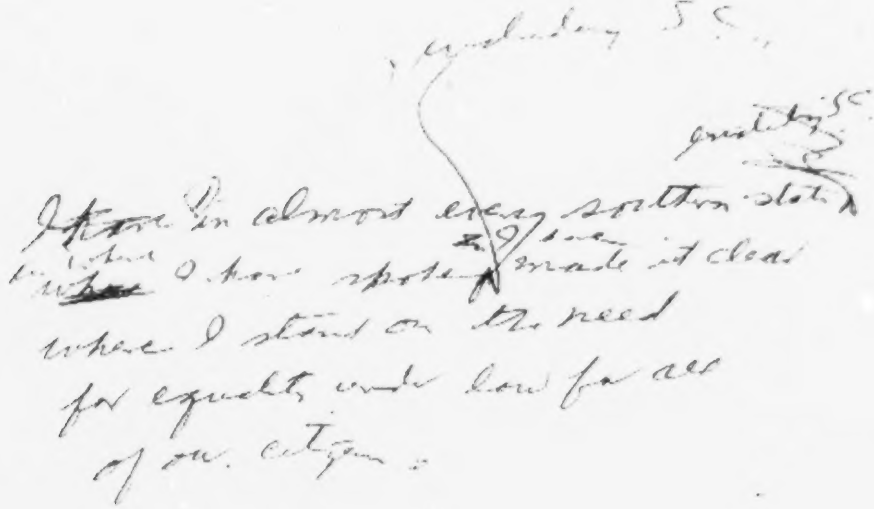
and she joins me in sending our warmest regards to you.


equality 5¢
equality 5¢
I have in almost every station-stop
where I stand on the need
for equality and law for all
of our citizens

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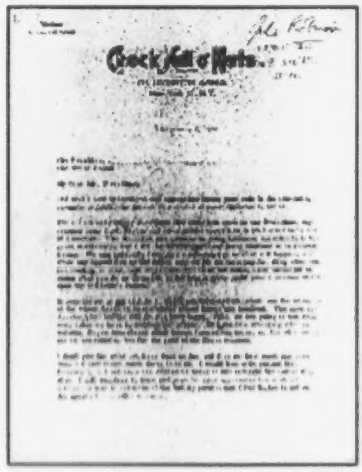
Document #4

LETTER
JACKIE ROBINSON TO PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY
FEBRUARY 9, 1961 (2 pages)



File: Jackie, Robinson 7/28/61-9/5/61; Box 8; Harris L. Wofford Papers; John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library, Boston, MA.

During the 1960 Presidential campaign an angry exchange occurred between JFK's "kid brother" Bobby Kennedy and Robinson after it became clear the latter would not support John Kennedy for election. Robinson, still a Chock full-o' Nuts executive, publicly stated that John Kennedy courted bigoted southerners while also claiming to support sit-ins and blacks' civil rights aspirations. In turn, Bobby accused Jackie of being anti-union. At the time he wrote this letter, Jackie believed he saw evidence that the administration was moving in the right direction, but he regarded the pace as too leisurely.

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Telephone
MUrray Hill 2-0600

Cocksfull & Nurts

425 LEXINGTON AVENUE
New York 17, N.Y.

FEB 13 4 52 PM '61

February 9, 1961

The President
The White House

My dear Mr. President:

I believe I now understand and appreciate better your role in the continuing struggle to fulfill the American promise of equal opportunity for all.

While I am very happy over your obviously fine start as our President, my concern over Civil Rights and my vigorous opposition to your election is one of sincerity. The direction you seem to be going indicates America is in for great leadership, and I will be most happy if my fears continue to be proven wrong. We are naturally keeping a wondering eye on what will happen, and while any opposition or criticism may not be the most popular thing when you are leading so well, you must know that as an individual I am interested because what you do or do not do in the next 4 years could have a serious effect upon my children's future.

In your letter to me of July 1, 1960, you indicated you would use the influence of the White House in cases where moral issues are involved. You have reiterated your stand, and we are very happy. Still, we are going to use whatever voice we have to awaken our people. With the new emerging African nations, Negro Americans must assert themselves more, not for what we can get as individuals, but for the good of the Negro masses.

I thank you for what you have done so far, but it is not how much has been done but how much more there is to do. I would like to be patient Mr. President, but patience has caused us years in our struggle for human dignity. I will continue to hope and pray for your aggressive leadership but will not refuse to criticize if the feeling persist that Civil Rights is not on the agenda for months to come.

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Telephone
MUrray Hill 3-0500

Chock full o' Nuts

425 LEXINGTON AVENUE
New York 17, N.Y.

May God give you strength and the energy to accomplish your most difficult task.

Respectfully yours,

Jackie Robinson

JRjcbc

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Document #5

TELEGRAM
JACKIE ROBINSON TO PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY
JUNE 15, 1963 (3 pages)

File: Jackie Robinson; Box 2355; White House Central Name Files, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, MA.

By this pivotal stage in the civil rights struggle, Robinson was fully aware of the lengths to which some Southerners were willing to go to resist desegregation. Not only had governors--including Mississippi's--resisted efforts to integrate lower-level schools, but they had attempted to block lawful efforts by black students to attend state colleges. Even more disturbing was the violence committed against civil rights freedom riders and marchers which was sanctioned, or at least condoned, by local white authorities. One of the worst cases had occurred recently in Birmingham, AL when firehoses, billy-clubs, and attack dogs were pitted against unarmed demonstrators. These brutalities and other incidents, culminating with Medgar Evers's death in June caused a coalition of civil rights groups to organize the massive March on Washington in August. That assemblage of more than 250,000 Americans, white and black, was intended to show public unity and a desire for more effective Federal protection than that afforded by the Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1960.

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The White House
Washington

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THE PRESIDENT
THE WHITE HOUSE

IT MIGHT SEEM FANTASTIC TO IMAGINE THAT EVEN IN THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI ANYONE WOULD SEEK TO DO INJURY TO A NON-VIOLENT LEADER LIKE DR MARTIN KING AS HE GOES THERE THIS MORNING ON A MISSION OF SORROW. YET IT WAS FANTASTIC BUT TRUE THAT SOME DEPRAVED ASSASSIN GUNNED DOWN ANOTHER MAN OF NON-VIOLENCE THE LATE MEDGAR EVERS WHOSE FUNERAL DR KING AND HIS ASSOCIATES

WILL BE ATTENDING TODAY IN JACKSON. SHOULD HARM COME TO DR KING TO ADD TO THE MISERY WHICH DECENT AMERICANS OF BOTH RACES EXPERIENCED WITH THE MURDER OF MR EVERS THE RESTRAINT OF MANY PEOPLE ALL OVER THIS NATION MIGHT BURST ITS BONDS AND BRING ABOUT A BRUTAL BLOODY HOLOCAUST THE LIKE OF WHICH THIS COUNTRY HAS NOT SEEN. I THEREFORE IMPLORE YOU IN THE SPIRIT OF YOUR RECENT MAGNIFICENT APPEAL FOR JUSTICE TO UTILIZE EVERY FEDERAL FACILITY TO PROTECT A MAN SORELY NEEDED FOR THIS ERA. FOR TO MILLIONS MARTIN KING SYMBOLIZES THE BEARING FORWARD OF THE TORCH FOR FREEDOM SO SAVAGELY WRESTED FROM THE DYING GRIP OF

MEDGAR EVERS AMERICA NEEDS AND THE WORLD CANNOT AFFORD TO LOSE HIM TO THE WHIMS OF MURDEROUS MANIACS

JACKIE ROBINSON.

1 of 1

02/05/98 12:17:0..

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Document #6

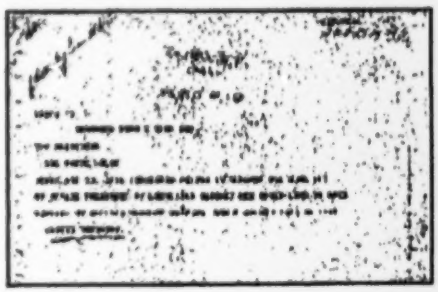
PHOTOGRAPH
JACKIE ROBINSON AND SON (DAVID) BEING INTERVIEWED AT THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON
AUGUST 28, 1963

(306-PSA-63-4527) Record Group 306: Records of the United States Information Agency , Still Pictures Branch, National Archives at College Park, MD.

Robinson, proud of being black, challenged racial pretensions throughout his life. As a child he fought with rocks against taunting neighbors; as an adolescent he went to jail for a traffic altercation involving a white motorist; and as a college star in four sports, he took no guff from race-baiting competitors. As an Army lieutenant, he so resisted efforts to make him move to the back of a southern bus that he eventually faced court-martial proceedings (where he was found innocent); and as a ball player, he railed against teams and individuals he believed to be racist. This vigilance against racial wrongdoing was a legacy he wanted to pass on to his children--to be willing to stand up for what they believed and to lawfully press for their rights as full-fledged Americans who happened to be black.

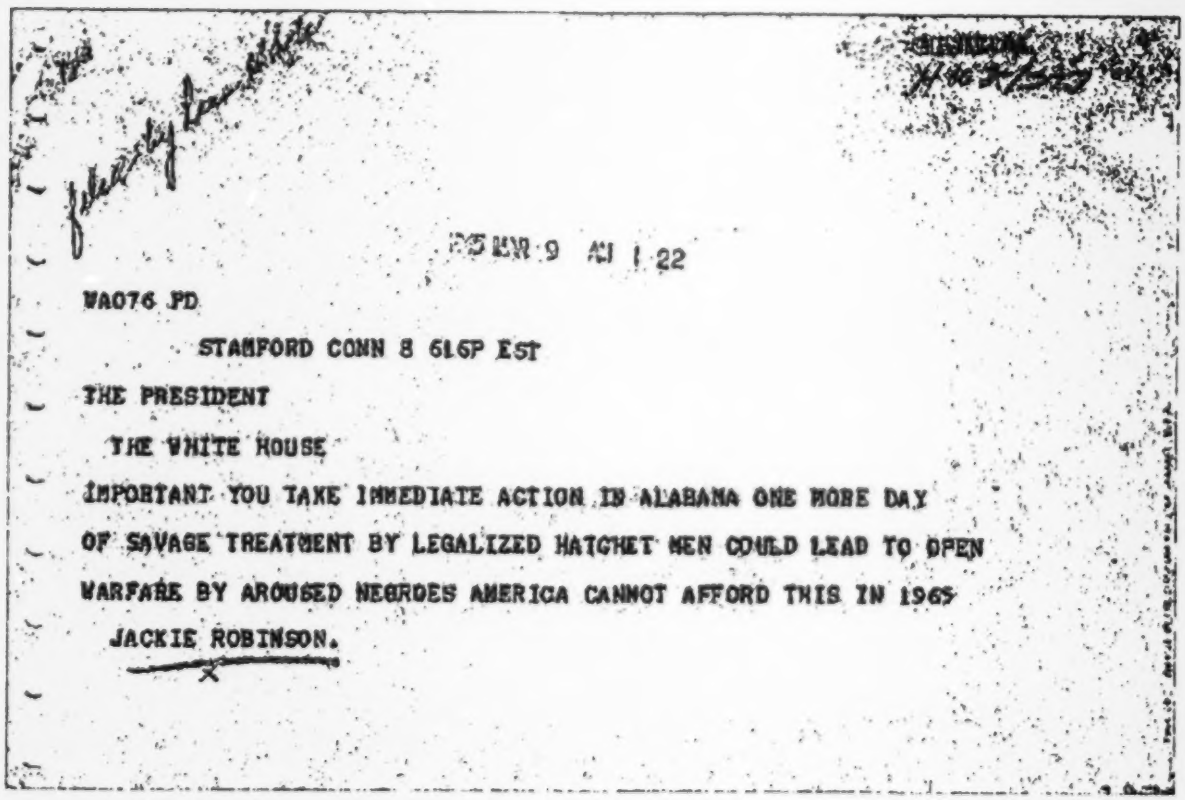
Document # 7

TELEGRAM
JACKIE ROBINSON TO PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON
MARCH 9, 1965



File: Jackie Robinson; Box 209; White House Central Files; Name Files; Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, Austin, TX.

Jackie Robinson was sickened, as so many other Americans were, by events in Selma, AL where marchers--including women, children, and clergy--were clubbed, resulting in several deaths and many injuries.



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WA076 PD

STAMFORD CONN 8 616P EST

THE PRESIDENT

THE WHITE HOUSE

IMPORTANT YOU TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION IN ALABAMA ONE MORE DAY OF SAVAGE TREATMENT BY LEGALIZED HATCHET MEN COULD LEAD TO OPEN WARFARE BY AROUSED NEGROES AMERICA CANNOT AFFORD THIS IN 1965

JACKIE ROBINSON.

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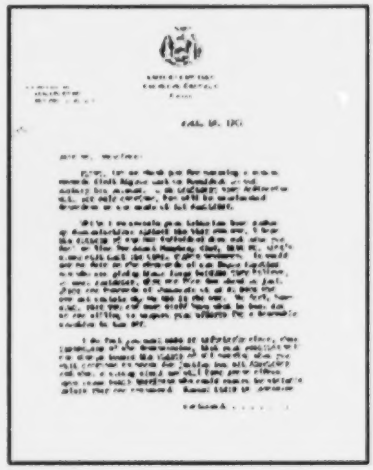
Document # 8

LETTER
JACKIE ROBINSON TO PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON
APRIL 18, 1967 (2 pages)



File: EX-HU 2 2/4/67-5/31/67; Box 4; White House Central Files; Subject Files; Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, Austin, TX.

Although Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was the most prominent spokesman for civil rights, other movement leaders, including A. Philip Randolph, James Farmer, and Julian Bond, actively opposed the war in Vietnam or at least resented the increased amount of Federal money going toward the conflict--resources that otherwise could be spent on domestic problems. Some, like Robinson, believed that King's open opposition endangered the credibility of the movement as charges of Communist infiltration continued to be leveled by white conservatives. Polarization and disillusionment seemed to be taking place in every sector of society.

STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
ALBANY

PLEASE REPLY TO:
[illegible]
NEW YORK 19, NEW YORK

April 18, 1967

Dear Mr. President:

First, let me thank you for pursuing a course towards Civil Rights that no President in our history has pursued. I am confident your dedication will not only continue, but will be accelerated dependent on the needs of all Americans.

While I am certain your faith has been shaken by demonstrations against the Viet Nam war, I hope the actions of any one individual does not make you feel as Vice President Humphrey does, that Dr. King's stand will hurt the Civil Rights movement. It would not be fair to the thousands of our Negro fighting men who are giving their lives because they believe, in most instances, that our Viet Nam stand is just. There are hundreds of thousands of us at home who are not certain why we are in the war. We feel, however, that you and your staff know what is best and we are willing to support your efforts for a honorable solution to the war.

I do feel you must make it infinitely clear, that regardless of who demonstrates, that your position will not change toward the rights of all people; that you will continue to press for justice for all Americans and that a strong stand now will have great effect upon young Negro Americans who could resort to violence unless they are reassured. Recent riots in Tennessee

continued. . . . . .

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PLEASE REPLY TO:
222 W. 23RD STREET
NEW YORK 11, NEW YORK

STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
ALBANY

and Cleveland Ohio is warning enough. Your concern based on causes and not on whether it will hurt the Civil Rights effort, could have a wholesale affect on our youth.

I appreciate the difficult role any President has. I believe, also, yours is perhaps the most difficult any President has had. I hope God gives you the wisdom and strength to come through this crisis at home, and that an end to the war in Viet Nam is achieved very soon.

Again Sir, let me thank you for your domestic stand on Civil Rights. We need an even firmer stand as the issues become more personal and the gap between black and white Americans get wider.

Sincerely yours,

Jackie Robinson

Jackie Robinson

The Honorable Lyndon B. Johnson
The President of the United States
The White House
Washington 25, D.C.

cc: Hon. Hubert H. Humphrey
Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller

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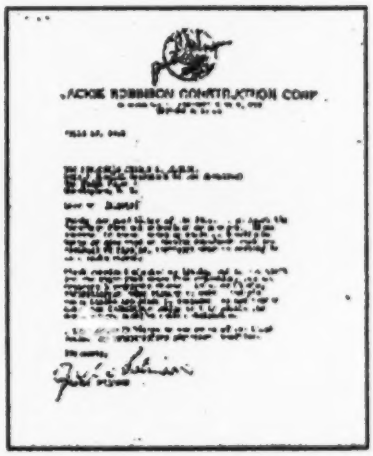
Document # 9

LETTER
JACKIE ROBINSON TO ROLAND L. ELLIOTT
APRIL 20, 1972 (1 page)



Folder: Gen HU 2-1 1/1/72-12/31/72; Box 20; White House Central Files; Nixon Presidential Materials Staff; National Archives at College Park, MD.

Time had taken its toll upon Jackie Robinson. Failing health contributed to the pessimistic tone of this letter to Presidential assistant Roland L. Elliott. In addition to suffering from diabetes, hypertension, and the effects of several heart attacks, his hair had turned almost white, he had lost most of his vision, and he was forced to walk with use of a cane. In addition, the deaths of his baseball mentor, Branch Rickey; his mother; and his first son, Jackie Robinson, Jr., together with the assassinations of Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., and John and Bobby Kennedy weighed heavily on him. Further, the escalation of violence on all sides, and the growing radicalization of the civil rights movement , made him fear that wholesale bloodshed between the races was imminent. He died at the age of 53, scarcely 6 months after writing this letter.

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JACKIE ROBINSON CONSTRUCTION CORP.
563 SYLVAN AVENUE • ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS, N.J. 07632
TELEPHONE: 201-871-1218

April 20, 1972

The Honorable Roland L. Elliott
Deputy Special Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Elliott:

Thanks for your letter of the 14th. I am sorry the President does not understand my concern. Black America, it seems, comes up short as Presidents study or give time to fashion standards that are designed to help all Americans when in reality it is a smoke screen.

Black America has asked so little, but if you can't see the anger that comes from rejection, you are treading a dangerous course. We older blacks, unfortunately, were willing to wait. Today's young blacks are ready to explode! We had better take some definitive action or I am afraid the consequences could be nation shattering.

I hope you will listen to the cries of the black youth. We cannot afford additional conflict.

Sincerely,

Jackie Robinson

Jackie Robinson

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Jackie Robinson Quotes:

Baseball was just a part of my life. Thank God that I didn't allow a sport or a business or any part of my life to dominate me completely. . . . I felt that I had my time in athletics and that was it.

The right of every American to first-class citizenship is the most important issue of our time.

I don't think that I or any other Negro, as an American citizen, should have to ask for anything that is rightfully his. We are demanding that we just be given the things that are rightfully ours and that we're not looking for anything else.

I guess you'd call me an independent, since I've never identified myself with one party or another in politics. . . . I always decide my vote by taking as careful a look as I can at the actual candidates and issues themselves, no matter what the party label.

Civil rights is not by any means the only issue that concerns me--nor, I think any other Negro. As Americans, we have as much at stake in this country as anyone else. But since effective participation in a democracy is based upon enjoyment of basic freedoms that everyone else takes for granted, we need make no apologies for being especially interested in catching up on civil rights.

I won't 'have it made' until the most underprivileged Negro in Mississippi can live in equal dignity with anyone else in America.

Life is not a spectator sport. . . . If you're going to spend your whole life in the grandstand just watching what goes on, in my opinion you're wasting your life.

It is up to us in the north to provide aid and support to those who are actually bearing the brunt of the fight for equality down south. America has its iron curtain too.

Negroes aren't seeking anything which is not good for the nation as well as ourselves. In order for America to be 100 per cent strong--economically, defensively, and morally--we cannot afford the waste of having second-and-third class citizens.

I believe in the goodness of a free society. And I believe that society can remain good only as long as we are willing to fight for it--and to fight against whatever imperfections may exist.

Activity idea: Determine which of the Jackie Robinson documents best reflects the message conveyed in each of the above quotes.